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USIAS-M-16
12 May 1954

Approved For Release 2001/08/27 : CIA-RDP61S00750A000100140216-5

USIA SURVEY

Memorandum of Meeting of 12 May 1954
1778 Pennsylvania Avenue, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

Members of Survey:

Mr. James Q. Reber, CIA

CIA
CIA

CIA

Observers: USIA:

Mr. Henry Loomis, SA/Dir
Mr. Saxton Bradford, AD/FE
Miss Lillie Kleven, ICS
Mr. Louis Olom, CPI
Miss Winifred Farah, IRI/R
Mr. F. J. McCarthy, IOP/FE
Mr. William Bennett, IPS/FE
Mr. Turner Shelton, IMS

State:

Mr. Allan Evans, OIR
Mr. Rockwood Foster, PSA
Mr. William C. Hamilton, OIR
Mr. Howard Penniman, OIR/PIRS

CIA:

OCB:

Briefing on USIA Program in Thailand

1. Mr. Bradford gave a thorough briefing on the USIA Thailand programs and operations in order to permit the group to see clearly what USIA is trying to do in Thailand, the better to identify the types of intelligence which USIA needs to carry out its plans.

2. After identifying Southeast Asia as the highest priority area of USIA in the Far East, Mr. Bradford explained that a staff of 27 Americans in Thailand is seeking to double USIA's regular programs there and, in addition, develop special programs.

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

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Regular Program

3. Press: USIA headquarters' wireless file goes to 24 newspapers and radio commentators in Thailand. The newspapers are printed in Thai, English and Chinese.

4. Publication Program: Locally the PAO and his staff arrange for the production of magazines, leaflets, booklets and posters, in English and Thai, depending on production in Manila for more ambitious projects, and on Hong Kong for printing materials for the Chinese minority. Among products distributed is the magazine Free World, which has a distribution of thirty to forty thousand. Articles appearing in local publications which have been originated by USIA are, whenever possible, reproduced with attribution to the magazine from which it was taken. USIA encourages the cooperation of local publishers by such inducements as purchase of pre-publication rights to certain articles and assistance in obtaining newsprint when in short supply.

5. Radio: VOA has short wave transmission to Thailand which is also relayed on standard wave. Thai radio stations are government owned. Some programs produced locally by USIA are fed to the Thai stations as well as to the 2-hours indoctrination program which the Thai army conducts.

6. Movies: Some movies are produced locally under contract while standard documentary and news films are produced in Washington for dissemination to Thailand. There are now eight mobile movie units in the Country and these are being increased to eighteen.

7. Information Centers: Such centers, which provide library facilities and conduct cultural activities, are now three in number, with three more to be added. These latter three will be located near the frontiers of Laos and Cambodia, this being also true with respect to the current center at Chaeng Mai, which is about to be moved.

8. Bi-national Centers: Such centers provide a means for training in English (teachers being sponsored by the State Department). Four hundred Thai officials have been exposed to such

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training. The excellent student response is largely due to the locals' belief that mastery of English is an asset.

9. Additional Programs: These include the preparation of exhibits, such as for trade fairs, the letting of halls, and promotional activities which would add to the potential audience.

Special Programs in the new Build-Up

10. Mr. Bradford noted that the Thai people in general are a well-fed, contented people who came through the last war without having suffered the destruction experienced by other Asians. The Thai individual has little feeling for politics or the responsibilities of his own citizenship, there being a great gap between the government and the people. USIA planners have therefore concluded that it is necessary initially to alert the Thai leaders (and eventually the citizenry generally) as to the Communist threat. To that end two major indoctrination programs are underway:

a. A three months' indoctrination of a representative from each of the thirteen ministries of the government as to what Communism is and what its destructive effects have been. Emphasis is placed on what the effects would be, if the Communists took over, on the Buddhists, the kingship, private property rights, and the government bureaucracy. It is planned that after this indoctrination each of these individuals will conduct a similar indoctrination to his own civil service, there being about 1,000 in each of the ministries.

b. A similar program has been started at the territorial and village levels.

These programs are made easier by virtue of the fact that the Thai people are generally friendly to the U.S. Mr. Bradford described this program as the most thorough attempt to "saturate" a country yet undertaken by USIA.

Development and Administration of the Thai Program

12. Mr. Bradford noted that Ambassador Donovan has been aggressively supporting this program, which was submitted to Washington for review by IOP and the media, discussed by Mr. Bradford in Bangkok, and finally submitted to the administrative office in Washington for adjustments in funds. In addition, these

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plans have had the advice of friendly Thai leaders and it is understood that Mr. Donovan himself has a small informal planning staff for the Thai program.

13. In discussing what the Soviets are doing in Thailand, Mr. Bradford referred to their exhibit at a recent trade fair, which was extremely well done in comparison to that produced within the limited funds available to USIA for a U. S. exhibit. He noted that the Soviet propaganda program through Southeast Asia has been greatly expanded and includes such features as travelling athletic teams and the building of new embassies with greatly enlarged staffs.

Movies:

14. Mr. Shelton provided details regarding the Motion Picture Service operations, pointing out that, in general, decisions are made in the field as to what is used in the field, although, whenever possible, those scripts which have been produced by Thais under contract and with the supervision of a Hollywood script writer are reviewed in Washington before use.

15. Mr. Shelton explained that it would be very helpful to IMS if he could have advance information and notification from intelligence of occurrences which could be filmed and, though classified at the time, might later be released when declassified. He cited as an illustration the Petrov case, although he recognized that that case was entirely open and that pictures were taken by the news people. If advance notice were available, arrangements could be made with his New York contract to take either moving or still pictures or special arrangements could be made.

Next Steps in the Thailand Study:

16. It was agreed that the survey team, in cooperation with IOP, would make explicit those intelligence assumptions upon which the present Thailand program rests. These assumptions would then be reviewed with the media and with the producers of intelligence. It was thought that a useful way to identify the most significant intelligence needs (exclusive of intelligence for direct use in broadcasts, scripts, etc.) would be to test these assumptions against

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the intelligence currently available, specifying as precisely as possible where there is not sufficient existing information to permit such testing. In this connection, account will be taken of the 12 May outline (distributed at the meeting by Mr. Clom) of a Thailand survey which is being performed under external contract.